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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7068
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0509
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 0338
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 1791
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0629
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0276
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0215
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 1083
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN 0048
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0027
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0932
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0216
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0410
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0261
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1153
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0341
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1161
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0093
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0381
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RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0588
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0827
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1553
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0137
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0141
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0195
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0641
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 002932

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2017

TAGS: PREL KMPI KDEM PINR GM EUN

SUBJECT: EGYPT: MFA'S BMENA REPRESENTATIVE DISCUSSES FORUM
FOR THE FUTURE PLANNING

REF: STATE 136556

Classified by CDA Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Charge called on Ambassador Raouf Saad, FM Aboul Gheit's Coordinator for Reform Initiatives, on September 24 to discuss the planning for the Forum for the Future (FFF). Saad indicated that he personally plans to attend the upcoming sub-ministerial in Berlin (reftel). Saad made clear that the GOE continues to see the FFF goal of bringing NGOs to the same table as governments as problematic. Charge replied that the USG remains committed to supporting free and effective NGO operations in support of reform both in Egypt and across the BMENA region, and urged the Egyptian side not to undermine consensus on this point, as it had at the 2005 FFF in Manama.

¶2. (C) Saad's bottom line was that the GOE sees the FFF as the "only living creature" of the BMENA process and that the GOE agrees that "we all need" a mechanism to discuss and promote human rights, democracy, and education and economic reform. He also hinted, however, that the GOE would not cooperate if the FFF organizers press too hard on giving NGOs a seat at the table. "This ministerial cannot fail," Saad warned.

¶3. (C) Turning to the issue of direct donor funding to NGOs

in Egypt, Saad dropped his diplomatic cordiality and bluntly told the Charge that the GOE is "outraged" that IRI and NDI continue to conduct operations in Egypt. The GOE disagrees, Saad said, "with the choice of certain individuals to violate the law. We will not put them in prison, of course," said Saad, but their conduct is "disrespectful."

¶4. (C) Saad added that the GOE realizes that the long-standing issue of the registration of NDI, IRI, and IFES "has to be settled. It's taking a lot of time." At the end of the conversation, Saad noted that IFES "seemed to be a bit smarter" in its efforts to work with Egyptian organizations like Cairo University and al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. The Charge urged Saad to use all his influence to effect a satisfactory resolution to the registration issue. "I'm hearing you," replied Saad. The Charge also pressed Saad to urge his GOE colleagues, including security officials, to work more closely with the USG when there are disputed cases of NGO registration and funding which involve the USG support.

¶5. (SBU) Bio note: Saad retired from a distinguished diplomatic career in early 2007, but returned to the MFA at the special request of FM Aboul Gheit after the previous Assistant for Special Initiatives, Amb. Mohamed Shaaban, was seconded to the UN as Under Secretary for General Assembly and Conference Management. In his diplomatic career, Saad had served as Egyptian ambassador to Brussels (and the EU) and as ambassador to Russia. During the course of the meeting with Charge, Saad reminisced fondly about his work

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with U.S. diplomats. Saad's wife died recently after a lengthy illness.

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